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## Industry Wrapups

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## Biz Buzz

# Pakistan eyes tech presence

**Timothy Roberts**

Pakistan is perched precariously at the edge of what may become a war zone at any minute, but the Pakistanis are pressing ahead just the same with plans to boost their technology economy.

The presence of Toheed Ahmad in Silicon Valley proves that the southern Asian nation of more than 140 million people is determined to raise its high-tech profile.

Mr. Ahmad is Pakistan's general consul for information technology development. He's based in Los Altos and has been busy making acquaintances in the sizable Pakistani expatriate community since his arrival this summer. Among the Pakistanis who are prominent in high-tech are Zia Chishti, CEO of Align Technology Inc. of Santa Clara, and Alex Naqvi, CEO of Luminous Networks of Cupertino.

"I would like to increase the visibility of the Pakistani contribution to the Bay Area technology economy," Mr. Ahmad says.

Pakistan has been pushing its high-tech agenda since 1995. Mr. Ahmad is hoping the Pakistani community here can help by steering some business to the old country.

Estimates of the valley's Pakistani population vary, but Mr. Ahmad says it is about 100,000.

He comes to Silicon Valley from Singapore, where he was Pakistan's ambassador. That also means the 30-year veteran of the Pakistan foreign service carries the rank of ambassador.

Asked if his efforts are threatened by the possibility of war in Afghanistan, which shares a border with Pakistan, he replies diplomatically: "There is an opportunity here, as much attention is focused on Pakistan. There is a desire to work with the government to strengthen Pakistan. My country is seen as a means of stability in the region."

### • Giuliani may stomp for Simon

On the morning of Sept. 11, Bill Simon, Republican candidate for governor of California, was having breakfast with New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. Their breakfast ended suddenly, Mr. Simon says, when the mayor's security detail broke the news that an airliner had just struck the World Trade Center.

Mr. Simon worked for Mr. Giuliani when the mayor was U.S. district attorney in Manhattan. Mr. Giuliani also issued a public statement in June 2000 at the death of Mr. Simon's father, William E. Simon, former energy czar in the Nixon administration and treasury secretary in the Nixon and Ford administrations.

In an e-mail describing his visit with the mayor, Mr. Simon writes, "Rudy, as he has always done in moments of crisis, immediately assumed command and leadership of the situation that terrified his city and our nation."

Mr. Simon was in New York to discuss a campaign stop in California by the mayor if, as expected, the Yankees come to Oakland to play the A's in the American League playoffs.

Mr. Simon may need some help from a star. In a Field Poll released Sept. 26, he trails former Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan and Secretary of State Bill Jones in the race for the Republican nomination for governor.

### • A call for tolerance

U.S. Reps. Mike Honda, Zoe Lofgren and Anna Eshoo are among 32 members of Congress to sign a letter to baseball Commissioner Allan Selig, asking him to urge baseball teams and owners to issue calls for racial tolerance at ball games. Mr. Honda instigated the letter, which reads in part, "The important role that sport plays in the lives of Americans affords you unique access to the public at a pivotal time in our history."

The San Francisco Giants haven't gotten word from Mr. Selig yet, says Staci Slaughter, vice president of public affairs for the Giants, but would be pleased to go along. When the Giants resumed play Sept. 18, the game opened with a prayer by the Rev. Cecil Williams of Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco, who called for tolerance.

The Oakland A's will comply with any directive from the commissioner, says spokesman Jim Young, who notes they already sing "American the Beautiful" at the seventh inning stretch.

### • Taxing work lies ahead

Larry Carr, a Morgan Hill city councilman and director of education and work force preparedness for the Silicon Valley Manufacturing Group, has his work cut out for him. Gov. Gray Davis has appointed him to the Commission on Tax Policy in the New Economy. The group will be looking at the impact of the Internet on taxes.

Many states would like to collect sales tax on items purchased on the Internet. A number of brick-and-mortar retailers complain that by not taxing Internet purchases, states are giving e-business a free ride.

"I'm in a unique position, being in local government and working for the manufacturing group," Mr. Carr says.

The manufacturing group represents 190 member companies employing 200,000 people in the valley.

Mr. Carr worked for U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo, a Palo Alto Democrat, before coming to the manufacturing group about a year and half ago.

*Got a tip? Contact TIMOTHY ROBERTS at (408) 299-1821 or [troberts@bizjournals.com](mailto:troberts@bizjournals.com).*



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